

The Ribbon Dragon



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The village fair burst to life with color. Banners flapped, balloons bobbed, and ribbons twisted around every pole. Lily, an eight-year-old girl in a yellow polka-dot sundress, skipped through the gate. Her red hair clip bounced as she waved to Mayor Bea, who stood tall in her emerald-green coat, gold buttons gleaming. "Welcome to the best fair ever!" the mayor boomed. Lily's dark-brown eyes sparkled with excitement.



Near the bandstand, Pip the puppeteer, a lanky twelve-year-old in blue overalls, was hanging a long chain of ribbons. Red, blue, yellow, green, and pink strips fluttered in the breeze. Lily helped him tie knots. "These are for the closing parade," Pip said, grinning crookedly. "But they keep slipping." Lily giggled as a pink ribbon tickled her freckled nose.



Suddenly a gust of wind whooshed through the fair. The ribbons twisted and twirled, looping around each other faster and faster. Lily gasped. The ribbons shimmered and shaped themselves into a tiny dragon, no bigger than a cat! Its body was woven from glossy satin ribbons, with button eyes and small ribbon wings. A gold bell jingled at its neck. "Oh my!" Lily whispered.



The ribbon dragon blinked its button eyes and flapped its wings. It soared into the air with a happy flip. "Wheeee!" it seemed to sing, though it had no mouth. It zoomed straight through a string of paper lanterns, tangling them into a jumble. Lily watched as the little dragon looped around a balloon arch, leaving it in a messy knot.



The ribbon dragon was full of joy. It dove through a flower garland, twisting the blossoms into a tangled ball. It swooped under a banner, wrapping itself around the pole. "Stop, little friend!" Lily called, but the dragon just jingled its bell and flew on, leaving a trail of tangled decorations. Mayor Bea frowned, adjusting her round glasses. "This is a disaster!" she said.



Lily ran after the dragon. "Please slow down!" she called. But the dragon zoomed past a food stall, snagging the striped awning. It wrapped around a cotton-candy cart, spinning the pink fluff into a cloudy mess. People ducked and laughed, but Lily saw the mess growing. She needed to help the little creature understand.



Pip caught up to Lily, his puppet bouncing on his hand. "That dragon is fast!" he said. "But look, it's not being mean—it's just having fun." Lily nodded. "It doesn't know it's making a mess. I need to show it how to fly carefully." She held out her hand gently. "Here, little dragon! Come to me!"



The ribbon dragon paused mid-flap, its button eyes curious. It drifted down and landed on Lily's outstretched palm. Its ribbon tail streamers curled around her fingers. The gold bell tinkled softly. "You're beautiful," Lily said. "But your flying is a bit too wild. Let's practice flying carefully, so everyone can enjoy the fair." The dragon tilted its head, as if listening.



Lily pointed to a clear space above the fairground. "Watch me," she said. She walked slowly, weaving between people and poles, showing how to move without bumping. The dragon watched intently. Then Lily tossed a ribbon into the air. "Now you try! Fly around the people, not through them." The dragon flapped its wings and lifted off.



The dragon zoomed toward a group of children, then swerved just in time. It circled a balloon arch without touching it. "Good job!" Lily cheered. The dragon jingled happily. It practiced flying in gentle loops, dipping and rising with care. Pip clapped. "It's learning!" The dragon flew to Lily and nuzzled her cheek with its soft ribbon nose.



Mayor Bea hurried over, her emerald-green hat slightly askew. "The closing parade is about to start!" she said. "But the decorations are a tangled mess. What can we do?" Lily smiled. "The ribbon dragon can help. It knows how to fly carefully now." The mayor's warm amber eyes widened. "A flying dragon in the parade? That would be wonderful!"



Pip untangled a long red ribbon and handed it to Lily. "Let's practice the parade route," he said. Lily held the ribbon high, and the dragon followed it, flying in smooth, graceful curves. It looped around Pip's puppet, around Mayor Bea's hat, and around Lily's satchel—without tangling a single thing. "Perfect!" Lily laughed.



The parade began with a fanfare. Mayor Bea led the way in her emerald coat, and Pip marched beside her with his puppet dancing. Lily walked in the middle, holding the red ribbon. The ribbon dragon flew above, its multicolored body shimmering in the sun. It swooped and swirled, looping around lampposts and over flower carts, always careful, always joyful.



The crowd gasped and cheered. The dragon's ribbon wings fluttered like a rainbow. It flew through a hoop of flowers, then spiraled up, its curly tail streamers trailing behind. The gold bell jingled a happy tune. "Look at it go!" a child shouted. The dragon dipped low to wave a wing at the children, then soared back up, perfectly in control.



After the parade, Mayor Bea shook Lily's hand. "You taught that dragon well," she said. "It flew beautifully!" The ribbon dragon landed on Lily's shoulder and rubbed its button eyes against her hair clip. Pip grinned. "I guess freedom comes with consideration for others," he said. Lily nodded. "And flying carefully means everyone can have fun together."



The ribbon dragon jingled its bell and flew one last loop around the fair, leaving no tangles behind. Then it landed on Lily's outstretched hand and curled up like a cozy scarf. "You'll always be welcome here," Lily whispered. The dragon's button eyes sparkled. And from that day on, it flew with care, bringing joy wherever it went.